

18 December 1953

STATOTHR



Dear Harry:

Sorry to be tardy in answering your note of the 2nd. Here's the general run-down on Soviet military promotions and personnel shifts since Stalin's death last March:

The Minister of Armed Forces since March 1953 - Bulganin; First Deputies -- Vasilevsky, Zhukov and Kuznetzov (?). N. G. Kuznetzov was Admiral of the Fleet to February 1948, demoted to Vice Admiral at that time; re-promoted to Admiral according to Tass on 8 June. He was seen at the British coronation on 2 June in a uniform of Admiral of the Fleet -- a two-jump promotion, in case Tass was wrong on 8 June. The two-jump promotion is likely since he appears after Marshal Zhukov in listings and may well be a third First Deputy Minister.

Col. General Zhigarev, head of the Soviet Air Force, has been promoted to Marshal of Aviation, according to Tass on 18 September. Former Chief Marshal of Aviation S. M. Vershinin, in obscurity for several years, has returned to prominence since July when he signed an obituary; he is listed after Zhigarev; his position is unknown.

General M. I. Nedelin has been promoted to Marshal of Artillery according to Tass on 19 September. He may be a Deputy Minister of Armed Forces for Artillery and is believed to be head of the PVO (Anti-Aircraft Defense) organization.

In the crucial Moscow area there have been three important shifts. The Commander of the Moscow Military District is Col. Gen. K. S. Moskalenko, replacing Col. Gen. P. A. Artemev about 22 July; Moskalenko signed an obituary in Pravda on 22 July; Artemev didn't. Pravda, for 7 November - the Revolution Anniversary - lists Moskalenko as in that post. He was formerly Chief of PVO for the Moscow area. The Commandant of the City of Moscow is now Maj. Gen. I. S. Koleznikov; he replaced Lt. Gen. K. R. Sinilov sometime around 1 September. He was mentioned by Tass as attending a Bulgarian reception on 8 September and was

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listed in the post by Tass on 25 September. Maj. Gen. A. I. Vedinin replaced Lt. Gen. N. K. Spiridonov, an MVD man, as Commandant of the Kremlin Guard sometime before 7 November when he was so listed in Pravda. This post has always been held by MVD officers in the past since it controls the physical security of the Kremlin; Vedinin is a professional military officer.

A clear case of Army entry into MVD posts occurred on 2 August when Army Maj. Gen. A. Inauri replaced MVD V. G. Dekanozov as head of the MVD of the Georgian SSR, a stronghold of Stalin and Beria supporters. This was noted in a Moscow broadcast.

Maj. Gen. L. I. Brezhnev was promoted to Lt. General according to Tass on 21 August; he had replaced Admiral Zekharov as Chief of the Navy's Political Directorate in March 1953. The Chief of the Political Directorate of the Armed Forces is Col. Gen. A. S. Zheltov. F. F. Kuznetsov is probably still the Chief of the Army's Political Directorate.

Several Generals have enjoyed considerable prominence lately after some period in obscurity -- there is Zhukov, of course, who stayed in outer darkness as long as Stalin was alive. Another World War II Marshal, I. S. Konev has returned to the limelight by signing Gen. Trofimenko's obituary in Investia - 20 October, after being out of the news at least since January 1953. Col. Gen. M. S. Malinin, Deputy Chief of Staff under Marshal V. D. Sokolovsky, was promoted to General according to Tass on 1 October and has enjoyed a great prominence lately. He was a member of the Western Division of the World War III General Staff as was another recently highlighted officer, General V. V. Kurasov, head of the Voroshilov Academy.

One formerly prominent officer, General S. M. Shtemenko, formerly Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, has dropped out of sight since 23 February 1953, and his present position is unknown.

The Chief of Staff of the Navy, Admiral A. G. Golovko appears, from listings, to have been replaced by Admiral V. A. Fokin who was promoted from Vice Admiral according to Tass on 1 October.

Other shifts include Col. Gen. A. I. Radzievsky replacing Marshal S. I. Bogdanov as Commander of the Tank Troops sometime in September; he signed the Tank Day article in Pravda on 13 September, a perquisite of the post of Commander. Lt. Gen. K. P. Gritchin replaced Col. Gen. V. I. Kuznetsov as head of DOSAAF (the civil defense organization) in July (in Pravda, 26 July).

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A number of shifts are believed to have taken place this summer and fall among the Commanders of the Military Districts in addition to the shift in the Moscow Military District. Col. Gen. S. G. Trofimenco, Commander of the North Caucasus MD, died in October; his obituary appeared in Izvestia on 20 October. Of course, Zhukov vacated the Ural MD post last spring. General Chuikov, Commander of Soviet forces in Germany, apparently has swapped jobs with Gen. A. A. Grechko who was Commander of the Kiev MD according to Pravda on 7 November. Col. Gen. N. M. Popov was noted as promoted to General and Commander of the Tauric MD in a Tass release for the same day.

Hope this proves useful to you.

Sincerely,

*RAJ*  
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Deputy Director/Intelligence

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